

Strings Gr 9-12 (MST5A 10S-40S)

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Course Description:

This course introduces and focuses students to the fundamentals of acoustic guitar playing while fostering musical literacy, creativity, and performance skills. It is designed for students with varying levels of experience (beginner to advanced) and aligns with the Manitoba Music Curriculum by incorporating elements of performance, theory, composition, and musical appreciation. By the end of this course, students will have gained a solid foundation in acoustic guitar technique, music theory, and performance, equipping them for further musical study or lifelong enjoyment of the instrument. Other string instruments may be introduced.

Course Objectives:

1. Develop fundamental guitar playing techniques, including posture, strumming, fingerpicking, and chord progressions.
2. Enhance musical literacy through the study of notation, tablature, rhythm, and chord symbols.
3. Explore diverse musical styles and cultural influences in acoustic guitar music.
4. Foster creativity through composition, improvisation, and collaborative projects.
5. Improve performance confidence through solo and ensemble playing.
6. Develop active listening skills and critical appreciation of acoustic guitar repertoire.

Implementation:

Students will alternate between two settings; one directed by the teacher and the other self-directed. The instructed classes will take place with students in the full band setting, practicing and performing for the teacher to receive instruction on improving their musicality, and performance enhancement. During the self-directed classes, the students will be expected to use their time to practice on their individual parts, open mic selections & consult on song selection and work on individual research or reports.

Assessment and Evaluation:

Final marks will be determined based on live stage performances and completion of assignments as listed below. Grading for each section will be as follows:

- **Rich Performance Task (Daily)** **50%**
 - A) Basic instrument care, maintenance, prep/tuning/playing procedures
 - B) Technique in methods/ exercises/ etc. (reading notation and performance skills)
 - C) Repertoire: 1) Canadian content 2) Acoustic Content 3) Teacher's choice 4) Own Choice
 - D) Repertoire: duet/ trio/ ensemble
 - E) Improvisation, Composition, Songwriting: class activity and assignments

The Daily Technique Demonstration in Performance rubric is attached.

- **Performance Demonstration (Final Product) 30%**

You will participate in at least one public performance or recording project of one of your songs from the 4 categories, ensembles, or personal composition.

One or both of Mid-Semester and/or Semester End. There is no “make-up” performance or assignment for a missed concert.

- **Reflection and Analysis 20%**

- A) notation quizzes, listening reflections
- B) Self-assessment and Self-Evaluation

Class Expectations:

1. To respect and encourage learning – yours and everyone else’s.
2. To be prepared for each day's class by having assignments complete, study, etc.
3. To act with respect and caution with some tools and materials.
4. To participate in all activities – it's how you learn.
5. To learn when to ask for help – and then ask for it.
6. In other words, *Be Here, Work Hard, Follow Procedures!*

Class Set-up: To earn full marks all students enrolled in PA for the semester are expected to attend and help with class/concert set up doing a variety of work such as moving chairs and tables, moving equipment, helping with sound checks, etc.

Stage Set-up: All students are expected to assist with set-up and tear-down at the end of the show. No one leaves early; we all leave as a group once the work is done.

Participation: It is imperative that students are available to perform and make our concert dates a priority. If students are not willing to make this class a priority and clear their calendars to perform for a concert that is part of their course curriculum, then there is little reason for them to be enrolled in the performing arts class. There is no “make-up” performance or assignment for a missed concert.

Resources & Materials:

- Acoustic guitar (personal instrument – preferred, or provided)
- Method books & online resources (e.g., Hal Leonard, Ultimate Guitar, MuseScore)
- Tuning apps (e.g., GuitarTuna, Fender Tune)
- Recordings of professional guitarists for analysis
- Video tutorials and online play-along resources

Have a great semester in Strings!

Rubric: Daily Technique Demonstration in Performance

CATEGORY	4 - All	3 - Most	2 - Some	1 - Few
Rehearsal / Set-up/ Performance Skills	I was focused, paid attention, listened to and followed instructions always.	I was focused, paid attention, listened to and followed instructions always, but sometimes was distracted by others.	I was focused, paid attention, listened to and followed instructions always, but was easily distracted by others and sometimes distracted others.	I rarely was focused, rarely paid attention, listened to and followed instructions always, Sometimes disruptive to rest of class.
Fluidity (Flow) from Practice	I have practiced my song enough that I don't make mistakes. I can play a song from start to finish without getting lost.	I have practiced my song, but I make a couple of mistakes. I can usually play a song from start to finish without getting lost. If I (rarely) do, I can find my spot again and continue.	My performance indicates some practice outside of class, but with little attention to areas of difficulty.	My performance indicates there is very little practice outside of class.
Rhythm Accuracy	I played the right rhythms. My notes were the right. 4,3,2,1, 1/8 notes	I played a couple wrong notes, but it didn't make the performance sound bad.	I played a few wrong notes, and you could notice it in the performance.	I played several wrong notes, and it made the performance sound bad.
Pitch	My fingering was always right, no errors. Pitch is very accurate.	One or two wrong fingerings, but it didn't make the performance sound bad.	Several fingering mistakes that were quite noticeable.	Many fingering mistakes. Only a few correct. Very noticeable in performance.
Articulation	I always enunciated my words and was clear and understandable.	I usually enunciated my words and was clear and understandable.	I sometimes enunciated my words and was clear and understandable.	I rarely enunciated my words and was clear and understandable.
Expression	Compared to how we practiced: My tempo (speed) was steady. My dynamics (louds and softs) were played correctly.	Compared to how we practiced: My tempo (speed) was usually steady. My dynamics (louds and softs) were mostly played correctly.	Compared to how we practiced: My tempo (speed) was sometimes steady. My dynamics (louds and softs) were sometimes played correctly.	Compared to how we practiced: My tempo (speed) was rarely steady. My dynamics (louds and softs) were rarely played correctly.
Tone Quality	Tone is consistently focused, clear, and centered throughout the range (high to low notes) of the instrument. Tone has professional quality. I sounded good.	Tone is focused, clear and centered through the normal playing range of the instrument. BUT the highest or lowest in range sometimes caused tone to be less controlled. Tone quality didn't make the performance sound bad.	Tone is often focused, clear and centered, but sometimes the tone is uncontrolled in the normal playing range. Highest or lowest in range are usually uncontrolled. Sometimes the tone quality made the performance sound bad.	The tone is often not focused, clear or centered regardless of the range being played, took away from the overall performance.

Band/ Performing Arts/ Choral/ Strings Assessment

Name_____Gr._____ Performance_____ Date_____

Self Teacher Peer

A. Skills: Key- *use performance rubric 4,3,2,1* (Wing 1 - Music Language and Performance Skills)

1. Rehearsal/Performance Skills: _____
2. Fluidity (Flow) _____
3. Rhythm Accuracy: _____
4. Pitch: _____
5. Articulation: _____
6. Expression: _____
7. Tone Quality: _____

Total A Skills....._____/28

B. Participation and Performance: (Wing 4 – Valuing Musical Experience)

Key: 3-Achieved/Surpassed 2-approaching 1-minimal/partial 0-not achieved/none

1. Punctuality: I came on time to the school and warm-up room._____
2. Dress/Attire: I wore correct attire for the concert. _____
(black/black, no hat, no gum)
3. Materials: I had all my music, instrument, etc. _____
4. Focus/Attitude: I was focused, productive, positive, ready to play, to be there, to have fun (both during when we played and when I was part of the audience.) I wanted to put on a good show. _____
5. BONUS: I volunteered in an extra job (stage crew/door) _____

Total B Participation and Performance....._____/12

TOTAL A and B....._____/40

Units of Study: Strings Gr 9-12 (MST5A 10S-40S)

Unit 1: Introduction to Guitar & Basic Techniques

- Parts of the guitar and maintenance
- Proper posture and hand positioning
- Tuning methods (standard tuning, digital tuners, harmonics)
- Basic open chords (C, G, D, A, E, Am, Em, Dm)
- Strumming patterns and simple rhythms

Unit 2: Musical Literacy & Notation

- Reading chord charts and tablature (TAB)
- Basic standard notation for melody playing
- Understanding time signatures, note values, and rests
- Introduction to lead sheets and chord symbols

Unit 3: Chord Progressions & Rhythm Development

- Common chord progressions (I-IV-V, ii-V-I, etc.)
- Introduction to bar chords and power chords
- Syncopation, percussive strumming, and fingerstyle patterns
- Playing with a metronome and developing rhythmic accuracy

Unit 4: Repertoire Development & Styles

- Exploration of different genres (folk, blues, rock, pop, classical, Indigenous, etc.)
- Learning songs from various cultures and historical contexts
- Application of techniques through selected pieces

Unit 5: Improvisation & Creativity

- Introduction to scales (pentatonic, major, minor)
- Improvisation techniques using scales and chord tones
- Songwriting and composition basics
- Creating original chord progressions and melodies

Unit 6: Ensemble Performance & Collaboration

- Playing in duos, trios, and full class ensembles
- Accompanying singers and other instruments
- Arranging music for small groups
- Performance etiquette and stage presence

Unit 7: Listening & Critical Analysis

- Active listening and identifying guitar techniques in recordings
- Discussion and analysis of notable acoustic guitarists (e.g., Tommy Emmanuel, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, Andrés Segovia)
- Writing reflective critiques on live or recorded performances

Unit 8: Final Project & Performance

- Selection and preparation of a solo or group piece
 - Performance assessment (rubric-based)
 - Reflection and self-evaluation of progress
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Additional Considerations:

- Differentiated instruction to support varying skill levels
- Opportunities for student-led learning and song selection
- Integration of Indigenous and culturally diverse music
- Encouragement of independent practice and personal goal setting

